

## A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Art Project To Strengthen Families**
- **Jail mural in the exit lobby of the Louisville Metro jail in Jefferson County**



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# HOMeward BOUND

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## KY DOC Supports Art To Strengthen Families Affected by Incarceration by Judi Jennings

Change often begins with imagining a new way of doing things. In the case of the mural pictured on page 6, now permanently installed in the exit lobby of the Louisville Metro Jail, change began as a visionary concept by dedicated corrections officers who believed that art has a place in the halls of justice.

As the officers imagined art inside the jail, a mother participating in video visitations with her incarcerated son envisioned how art activities could make the visitors lobby more welcoming and supportive of children and families impacted by incarceration. Initially unconnected, these two great ideas merged in 2007-thanks to the generous anonymous donation of the mother and the support of art-friendly allies within the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections.

Today, an innovative approach to strengthening families affected by incarceration is beginning to emerge as a result of a unique partnership between the Kentucky Foundation for Women (KFW) and its local and state-level allies in the Department of Corrections. Incorporating great ideas in 2007 led to KFW commissioning two highly skilled visual artists to collaborate with more than one hundred people, including jail staff, incarcerated persons and their loved ones, to identify positive images that evoke the importance of family,

**continued on page 2**



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nurture, hope and new beginnings. The result is this magnificent tile mosaic created with the assistance of more than 300 community members and a new partnership between the world of corrections, and the world of philanthropic art activities for positive social change.

From within the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections (LMDC), interim director, Tom Campbell, and social worker, Linda Zundel worked enthusiastically to help cultivate a spirit of trust and mutual respect between the corrections community and the broader community. As the mural began to take shape, KFW contracted with Monica L. Williams, a gifted artist who combines her academic training in theater and social change at New York University with more than five years experience at the Osborne Association, working with children of incarcerated parents.

Ms. Williams, whose main work is based in Brooklyn, came to Louisville and met with KFW and LMDC staff, and began designing a one-of-a-kind program in which KFW-sponsored artists would be trained to facilitate activities and create art with families and children in the visitors lobby of the jail. Based on her artistic training and on-the-ground experience, Williams developed concepts for empowerment techniques that art leaders could use to develop successful curricula that would address both the risk and protective factors that impact children of incarcerated parents.

In the 1990s, Dr. Emmy E. Werner, a noted child psychologist, began researching and identifying “protective factors” to help children affected by “risk factors” such as the incarceration of a parent or loved one. Researchers soon began to see the importance of creating and strengthening multiple protective factors for these children, and their families. Further research is showing that arts-based activities are powerful ways to build family strengths.

Since 2000, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has researched and documented the often-overlooked impact of incarceration on children and families of incarcerated persons. (See “Children of

Incarcerated Parents” on their website, [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org) ). Evidence shows that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to suffer from family financial instability, problems at school, and social stigmatizing. While the Casey Foundation primarily focuses its research on prisons, their statistics hold true for patterns observed in many jails throughout Kentucky.

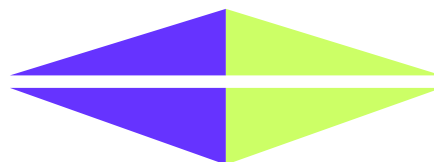
There are large impacts on families of color, with African-American and Hispanic children more likely to have an incarcerated parent than white children.

The average age of children with an incarcerated parent is 8 years old, with 22% of the children under age 5.

The continued generosity of the anonymous donor allowed for the creation of the Kentucky Foundation for Women’s “Special Project,” an on-going arts-based family strengthening program, operated in partnership with the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections. Monica Williams facilitated the inaugural training session for eighteen Kentuckiana artists who expressed a sincere interest for working with children and families in the visitors lobby of the Louisville Metro jail. The art-activities leaders familiarized themselves with proven empowerment techniques, and were guided to design curricula for art activities that would strengthen, and build upon, multiple protective factors.

Training sessions also included information about the US criminal justice system, and the stigma affecting children of incarcerated parents. Ms. Williams stressed the importance of respecting all persons in the visitors lobby: corrections officers, jail staff, visiting spouses, children, extended family and care-givers. Her expertise enabled art-activities leaders to discover creative and effective ways to engage with LMDC staff and visitors, achieve cooperation and build trust while making art in a highly unique setting.

Monica Williams reviewed all proposed activities to guarantee they adhered to the strengthening factors outlined in the Casey Foundation’s ground-breathing research, as well as holding fast to artistic quality and protective factor integrity. In 2008, teams of two art-activities leaders began working in the visitors lobby every Sunday night, a time slot with a high rate of family visitation. Today, four years later, the art teams continue to present activities every Sunday evening, reporting highly positive responses from visiting families and LMDC staff. Each week, the two team members write up their “reflections” on how well the activities worked, noting any problems or concerns, and identifying opportunities for improvement.



“In addition to the generous support of the anonymous donor, KFW’s Special Project has received contributions from two local churches and several individuals, including two incarcerated individuals.”

Here is a scene described on one Sunday evening:

*An eight-year-old boy sits at a plastic folding table, working intently on creating a “charm bracelet.” He draws small pictures of himself, family members and loved ones to cut out and paste on a yarn band he has just woven with the help of an arts-activities leader. When he tries to paste some of the small pictures on the yarn, they crinkle up and won’t lie flat. Seeing his frustration, a nearby teenager offers to help, holding the small pictures straight while the boy applies the paste. The boy tells the teenager about each of the people he has drawn as he carefully places the pictures on his bracelet.*

An experienced art-activities leader reports, “There are several families who now know us very well. When they see us with the art box, they are eager to get started. Sometimes new visitors hesitate to approach the table; but once they begin, they demonstrate a certain confidence that shows itself through beaming pride. Although some caregivers say it’s ‘for the kids,’ many of them make art, too, and exclaim how proud they are after they complete an activity. Additionally, we are establishing levels of trust with the young people there. They know each artist by name and often begin conversations where they left off the previous time we saw them. The art activities create a more welcoming environment and increase positive factors of accomplishment as visitors of all ages and backgrounds learn new skills and create art they can show their incarcerated loved one via video and take home and share with others.”

KFW’s Special Project has received contributions from two local churches and several individuals, including two incarcerated individuals. Ms. Williams still serves as National Artistic Director to the Special Project, and remains committed to its further development.



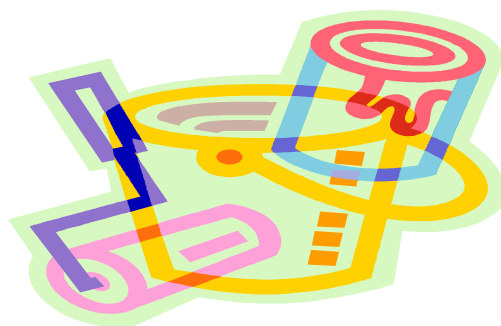
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Beginning in January, 2012, KFW embarked on a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Corrections to educate the larger community about the power of art to strengthen families and serve as an integral part of successful reentry. In cooperation with two Re-Investment Neighborhood Groups (RINGS) in the Shawnee and Newburg areas of Louisville, the Kentucky Foundation for Women's Special Project is expanding its activities to community-based settings and its vision to strengthen the protective factors in children after they're reunited with formerly incarcerated parents.

Collaboration with highly respected and well-established youth and family-oriented service organizations is a key factor in introducing art-based activities to families in these areas. KFW does not withhold any of the contributed funds for administrative costs; all funds are applied directly to strengthening families and to the crucial reentry work being done in the Louisville Metro area. Special Project staff and art activities team members invest over thirty cumulative hours a month exploring collaborative opportunities, creating and fine-tuning artistic programming, and facilitating family bonding activities with the children and families who are committed to supporting their loved ones during, and after, incarceration.

If you would like more information about the Special Project, and its ongoing dedication to the health and wholeness of Kentucky's families who are impacted by incarceration, please contact KFW executive director, Judi Jennings at [Judi@Kfw.org](mailto:Judi@Kfw.org).

**Please see page 6 for a picture of the mural and two photos of close-up work for detail.**

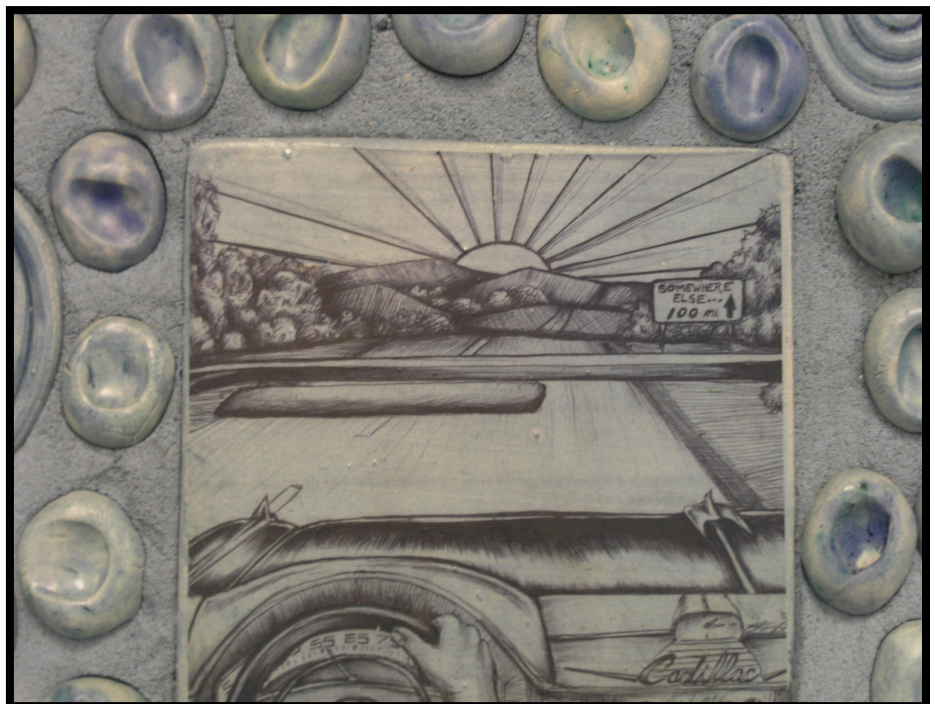


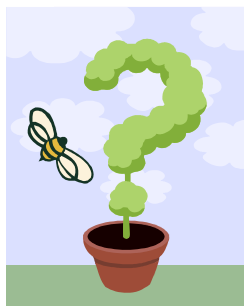


## Tile Mosaic located in the exit lobby of Louisville Metro Jail



These two enlarged views of the mosaic represent “positive images that evoke the importance of family, nurture, hope and new beginnings”.





## MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**QUESTION:** What are the basic principles of evidence-based practice?

**ANSWER:** Three basic principles of evidence-based practice have been gathered from the scientific research about what work to reduce recidivism among offenders under community supervision: 1) the risk principle; 2) the needs principle, and 3) the treatment principle.

**QUESTION:** What do we mean by an “intervention”?

**ANSWER:** Intervention refers to any planned activity to change offender behavior which can include a rehabilitation program, probation supervision practice, or even a judge’s courtroom conversation with the offender if undertaken for that purpose.

**QUESTION:** What are “static” and “dynamic” risk factors?

**ANSWER:** First, “risk factors” are offender characteristics that are associated with higher likelihood of future criminality. “Static” risk factors are risk factors such as age, gender, age at first arrest and prior criminal history that predict future criminality and cannot be changed or reduced in order to reduce the risk of re-offense. Risk of recidivism is dynamic; it changes over time, increasing and decreasing in light of changing circumstances in an offender’s life and choices made by the offender. Risk is also changeable: it can be changed by effective intervention. “Dynamic risk factors (also known as “criminogenic needs”) refer to those risk factors that predict future criminality but that also can be changed or reduced in order to reduce the risk of re-offense.